

KARE-11

ST. PAUL, Minn. -- St. Paul is about to do business in a cleaner, greener way with the arrival of a cool new electric utility vehicle.

On Tuesday, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, Governor Mark Dayton, Congresswoman Betty McCollum and Minneapolis Mayor RT Rybak unveiled the newest addition to the city's vehicle fleet, the all-electric Ford Transit Connect.

St. Paul is one of the first cities in the US to receive the vehicle, which will reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 3.5 tons, and save approximately \$1,300 per vehicle each year in gas costs.

Eight of the vehicles will soon be part of the city's fleet; they've been made available by Xcel Energy through the Azure Dynamics Corp. "Lead Customer" Program. Saint Paul will receive two additional Ford Transit Connects later in the year.

Xcel Energy will help fund the vehicles for a number of cities, government agencies and businesses that committed to purchasing and demonstrating this clean energy technology.

As part of the project, a partnership called 'Drive Electric Minnesota' will build up to 30 plug-in charging stations, some of which will be solar powered. Many of the charging stations will be located in the Energy Innovation Corridor, along the light rail line that will connect the cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

More information about the project is available at www.driveelectricmn.org.